

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 15, 2017

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Thank you for your great leadership in the ongoing fight against ISIS; it has resulted in turning-point victories this year. Many of our successes against ISIS would not have been possible without the unrelenting support, partnership, and loyalty of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Iraqi Kurdistan), one of the United States' most dependable allies in the region. Their Peshmerga forces are courageous and reliable, and a steadfast partner of the United States. With ISIS now being driven from Iraq, we are concerned that Iran's influence is growing and has the potential to undermine the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and overall stability of the region.

Iraqi Kurdistan has stood as an oasis of stability and democracy in this otherwise volatile and chaotic region. The KRG has provided a safe haven for persecuted religious minorities - including Christian, Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, Fayli, and Kakayee communities, many of whom fled the brutal atrocities committed by ISIS. Tolerance is integral to Kurdish culture - indeed, rights of persecuted minorities are expressly recognized and protected under KRG laws. Iran's growing influence, however, increasingly is threatening stability both within Iraq and on all sides of Iraq's borders. We are deeply concerned by reports that American-made military equipment has been deployed by Iranian-backed militias against the Kurds. We cannot afford to lose the peaceful region of Iraqi Kurdistan to Iranian-backed groups that are actively aligned against the United States.

We appreciate the State Department's recent call for dialogue between the parties, but statements alone are not enough. We must proactively seek to end all hostilities, and broker concrete negotiations that pave the way to stability, even if that means conditioning future aid on compliance. The continuing viability of KRG demands this, and the Kurdish people have earned it with their loyalty to the United States.

Our advances against ISIS in Iraq are truly laudable, and this region's future stability demands that we take nothing for granted. Iran wants nothing more than for the U.S. to move to the sideline, and allow Iran to fill the power vacuum once held by ISIS. Strong support for our allies in both Erbil and Baghdad is essential if we are to arrest Iran's growing influence. Iraqi Kurdistan has proven itself a loyal, dependable U.S. ally, and a beacon for democracy and tolerance throughout the Middle East.

We applaud the Administration's continued active leadership in effectively convincing the Government of Iraq to negotiate without violence its future relationship with KRG peacefully, consistent with your foreign policy objectives for the entire region.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



John Cornyn  
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator